



Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Rural District Council.

LADIES and GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the Health, Housing and Sanitary condition of the District for the year 1925.

General Statistics.

Area—

The District is situate in the Parliamentary Division of North West Wilts. The Malmesbury Rural District bounds it on the west, the Highworth District on the east, the Marlborough and Calne Districts on the south and the Cirencester District on the north. Its greatest length extends to about 17 miles, from Marston Maisey in the north to Clyffe Pypard in the south. Its breadth varies considerably. The southern half is hilly and extends up to the Wiltshire Downs, the northern portion sloping to the valley of the Thames. The subsoil is composed of clay and gravel in the north, brash and clay in the centre, and brash and chalk in the extreme south.

THE DISTRICT has an acreage of 46,734.

ESTIMATED POPULATION, 11,130.

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES is 2,942.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES AND SEPARATE OCCUPIERS: 2,942.

RATEABLE VALUE: £97,655.

SUM REPRESENTED BY A PENNY RATE: £246.

Occupations and Industries.

The principal occupation of the inhabitants is dairy farming, but a small amount of arable farming is carried on throughout the district. A considerable portion of the male population resident in Purton and Wootton Bassett is employed in the G.W.R. Works at Swindon. In all the smaller villages around these two places there are also many men who work in Swindon. Wootton Bassett is becoming distinctly more urban in character for the same reason, and the great majority of the new houses erected are occupied by men of the artisan class. This applies not only to Wootton Bassett and Purton but to all the surrounding villages, and the housing difficulty with regard to the essentially rural inhabitants and agricultural labouring community has not been solved therefore.

Leather gloves are cut out at Cricklade and made up by cottagers in the villages around, principally at Ashton Keynes. There are brick works of some size at Purton, but apart from these there are no other industries in the District.

Vital Statistics.

Birth Rate—

224 births were registered as occurring in the district, during the year, of which number 121 were males and 103 females, the rate per thousand of the population being 20.13. The number of illegitimate children born was four.

Death Rate--

Total deaths from all causes, 136; males 74, females 62. Death rate, 10.22 per thousand of the population. Number of women dying in, or in consequence of childbirth, 1. Deaths of infants under one year of age: males 9, females 5. Deaths from Measles, all ages: 1. Deaths from Whooping Cough, all ages: nil. Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age): nil.

The total number of deaths occurring during the year and the rate remain about the same. No unusual mortality occurred. The number of deaths certified as Heart Disease was 31, and constitutes the largest number under one cause. Cancer or malignant disease comes next, the total being 21. 3 persons died from tuberculous disease and 12 from influenza.

Infectious Diseases.

Disease.	Total Cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Small Pox	Nil		
Diphtheria	4	4	
Scarlatina	13	2	
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid) ...	Nil		
Puerperal Fever	Nil		
Pneumonia	3		
Other Diseases: Erysipelas	6		
Ophthalmic Neonatorum	Nil		

The incidence of notifiable infectious disease has been lower than usual. In fact, extraordinarily low. The cases of Scarlatina occurred in Wootton Bassett and Purton and near Swindon, and the four cases of Diphtheria each in a different part of the district. It will be noted that only two of the 13 cases of Scarlatina notified were removed to hospital. It so happened that in the majority of cases the disease could well be treated at home. As is the experience generally, the type of disease has become very mild in character, and I think on this account there is some difficulty in persuading parents of the necessity of allowing their children to be removed to hospital. The cases of Diphtheria were likewise of a mild type.

As regards the prevalence of diseases other than those notifiable I should say that all types of catarrhal infections predominate, and Fibrositis or Muscular Rheumatism in all its infinite varieties.

It is to be noted that no cases of Puerperal Fever or Ophthalmic Neonatorum were notified during the year.

The following Schools were closed by the County School Medical Officer during the year for various short periods on account of disease prevalent among the children.

Bradenstoke, on account of Influenza.
Broad Town, on account of Measles.
Clyffe Pypard, on account of German Measles.
Ashton Keynes, on account of Measles.
Lyneham, on account of Measles.

Tuberculosis.

Although more cases of this disease were notified than for any year since 1914 I do not think there is an increase of the disease in the district, but it is due to increased notification by medical men. It is correct I think, too, to say that the public are much more alive to facts regarding Tuberculosis and seek advice earlier both from their own medical men and also from the County Tuberculosis Officer at the Dispensary at Swindon.

There is no Tuberculosis Dispensary in the district, but the service is in the hands of the County Authorities, the nearest centre being the Dispensary at Milton Road, Swindon. Patients are sent there by their medical attendant for consultation and treatment, and the Assistant County Tuberculosis Officer will meet medical men in consultation whenever requested. Facilities for the examination of sputum and other pathological material in connection with the disease are available free of charge for all medical men in the District. Sanatorium treatment is provided by the County Authorities at Winsley, Bradford-on-Avon and Harnwood, near Salisbury.

Tuberculosis.

Age Periods	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0—1								
1—5								
5—10			3					
10—15		2	1	1				
15—20		3		1				
20—25				1				
25—35		1	2	1				
35—45	1	1						
45—55								
55—65								
65 upwards								
Total	1	7	6	4	1		1	1

Summary of Nursing Arrangements, &c.

Hospitals and other Institutions available in the District.

At the present time every parish in the District has the services of a District Nurse at its disposal, but in all cases they combine these duties with those of Midwifery. In the event of any serious epidemic occurring permission has been granted by the Council for the Medical Officer of Health to obtain the services of trained nurses where it is considered necessary.

Midwives.

The number of practising Midwives is eight, all of them fully trained and qualified. There are no 'handy women' now working, and medical men in the District practically all refuse to attend women in their confinements unless they have obtained the services of a trained nurse.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

There are none in the District at present. There are Clinics in Swindon for Venereal Disease and Tuberculosis and there is no difficulty in getting patients to attend them when necessary. There is also an Orthopædic Clinic for the treatment of deformities, &c., and much help has been given through this to sufferers from all parts of the District.

There is an excellent Maternity Home in Swindon which is available for any woman who cannot afford Nursing Home fees and prefers to be attended in a home, and also for any difficult or abnormal cases that medical men may consider require institutional treatment. As more ante-natal work is carried out by the District Midwives and abnormal cases discovered before the onset of labour, I feel sure the facilities available at the Home will be utilised by both medical men and their patients to a much greater extent.

Hospitals.

There is no General Hospital in the District. The population is dependent for hospital treatment required on the Victoria Hospital, Swindon, the Royal United Hospital, Bath, the Bristol Hospitals, and those at Cirencester and Savernake. At present there is no out-patient department at the Swindon Hospital, and the number of beds available is grossly inadequate to deal with such a large area as Swindon Town and the surrounding Rural Districts.

Isolation Hospital.

There is one for the District which is situate at Stone Lane, Lydiard Millicent, about the centre of the District. Accommodation is provided for 14 patients in two wards. Unfortunately only one disease can be treated at the Hospital at one time. If cases of different infectious disease occur simultaneously one is dealt with at the Lydiard Hospital, and the other by arrangement with the Swindon Town Council at their Isolation Hospital at Gorse Hill, Swindon.

Ambulance Facilities.

(1) Cases of infectious disease are removed by the Ambulance of the Swindon Isolation Hospital Board by arrangement with the Council.

(2) For cases of ordinary disease or accidents, no Ambulance is available in the District, but one can be hired at the expense of the patient from one of the principal garages in Swindon.

Laboratory Facilities.

Pathological and Bacteriological Examinations in the case of Tuberculosis and Infectious Diseases are carried out by the Clinical Research Association, London, at the Council's expense, and these facilities are taken advantage of by all the medical men practising in the District.

Adoptive Acts.

Part III of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890 to 1891.	
Bye-Laws in regard to Slaughter-houses	1924.
Bye-Laws in regard to New Houses and Streets	1915.
Sections 23, 26, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 of the Public Health Act	1925.
Section 39 in respect of the Parishes of Cricklade, Purton and Wootton Bassett.	

Sanitary Administration.

Water Supply.

There is a Public Water Supply to the three chief townships, viz. : Cricklade, Purton and Wootton Bassett.

The supply at Cricklade is derived from a well in the gravel on the north side of the town, and is pumped from there to Windmill Hill, where it passes through two filter beds, each having a capacity of 25,000 gallons, to a reservoir with a storage capacity of 50,000 gallons. Thence it gravitates to all parts of the Town. The supply is adequate to meet all demands. The water supply of Leigh, a parish to the west of the town, being totally inadequate and unsatisfactory, arrangements were made with Cricklade Parish to supply the houses erected by the District Council at Leigh under the Housing Scheme, and the houses were connected and served from the Windmill Hill reservoir, further pumping being required.

The Purton water supplied is derived from adits driven into the hill at Pavenhill. These produce at most about 9,000 gallons per day, dropping to about 4,000 during an average summer. In my reports of previous years I have frequently mentioned the inadequacy of this supply. The condition of the tunnels is deplorable and no steps were taken during the year to restore these, the Council considering it advisable to seek a fresh supply. A supplementary supply is obtained from a well situate at the Peak, Purton, from which is obtained 4,000 and 1,500 gallons per day according to season, by means of a windmill and petrol pump. With the installation of a sewage system in Purton the question of a satisfactory supply will become exceedingly acute.

The supply at Wootton Bassett is derived from the Marlborough Downs near Clyffe Pypard and is carried to the township by gravitation. There are two storage tanks at the northern end of the town, a low level one with a capacity of 50,000 gallons and a high level one of 5,000; from these it is distributed to the town by gravitation. The yield for 1925 averaged 79,000 gallons per day for the winter half year, and minimum for the summer half was 35,000. The water is pure and of good quality, and is the most satisfactory supply in the District.

Pollution of Rivers and Streams.

During the year complaints have again been received from the Thames Conservancy Board with regard to pollution of the River Key. The Purton Drainage Scheme, the work on which was commenced during June, will in future do away with this.

The effluent from the new Council houses at Cricklade, which is discharged into an open ditch, causes a considerable nuisance, and although steps have been taken to put in further coke beds I fear this will not put an end to the trouble.

Drainage.

Cricklade and Wootton Bassett have systems. Although that at Cricklade is not up-to-date, it works satisfactorily, and there are no causes of complaint.

That at Wootton Bassett continues to give every satisfaction.

As the result of the public enquiry held at the latter end of 1924, an expenditure of some £9,500 was permitted by the Ministry of Health for the purpose of laying a sewerage system at Purton, and work was commenced on this in June. The scheme is, unfortunately, only a partial one and leaves untouched the Pavenhill part of the parish, which in many ways particularly wants dealing with. The system takes in the new houses at the Peak, and drains practically the whole lower end of Purton, including Church Street and Church Path. The disposal works are situated near the Common and are up-to-date and designed in accordance with modern requirements.

Scavenging.

Wootton Bassett is regularly and thoroughly scavenged once weekly, the refuse being burnt in the sewage outfall field. Refuse, such as empty tins, etc., is collected in Purton. No scavenging is carried out at Cricklade. I think that some system could well be inaugurated in this parish.

Inspection of the District.

This has been regularly carried out by the Sanitary Inspector. The inspections relate to houses, bake-houses, dairies, milk factories, slaughter houses, knacker yards, etc.

Milk.

There is a large and up-to-date milk factory at Wootton Bassett owned by the United Dairies Co., Ltd., where many thousand gallons of milk are dealt with daily. Pasteurization and the production of milk powder and cheese making are carried out there. The smaller factories owned by the same company at Purton Stoke and Cricklade have been closed.

There are 294 persons registered who sell milk in bulk. These keep approximately 7,500 milch cows. There are 61 retailers, and these milk approximately 550 cows.

The Sanitary Inspector has carried out inspections systematically, and many improvements have been made, particularly as regards the provision of impervious floors, lighting and ventilation. General improvement has been made in keeping the cows clean, and also in the cleanliness of the milk and vessels. Two licenses have been granted for the sale of milk under the designation of Grade A.

The registration of one retailer was revoked. No action has been taken to analyse samples of milk.

Meat.

The Sanitary Inspector has carried out inspections systematically. Many calves are slaughtered weekly and the carcasses sent to London by road transport, sometimes as many as 200 or more. There is one bacon factory in the District, where many pigs are killed every week. Diseased carcasses are burnt. About 20 cattle and 80 sheep are killed weekly. There is no public slaughter-house in the District.

Slaughter-houses.

	In 1920.	In Jan., 1925.	In. Dec., 1925.
Registered	10	10	10
Licensed	1	3	7
	<hr/> 11	<hr/> 13	<hr/> 17

Knacker Yards.

There are two licensed knacker yards in the District, and these have been regularly inspected.

Bakehouses.

There are 16 bakehouses in the District. All of them have been kept in a cleanly and satisfactory condition.

Public Health Staff.

Consists of Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector whose salaries are contributed to by the Ministry of Health under the Public Health Acts.

Housing.

Since the last Survey Report 170 houses have been erected under the Housing Scheme. As stated in the earlier part of this Report, the erection of these houses has not dealt with the housing problem among the essentially rural population, as the excessive cost of building the houses demands a rental which the agricultural worker cannot afford to pay, the greater number of the houses are therefore occupied by persons new to the District and belonging to the artizan class.

Speaking generally many of these land workers (and this is mainly an agricultural district) are still living in houses which are not desirable habitations, and which would soon become void if houses were built which could be let at a rental they could afford to pay. Until this is done it is impossible to condemn many houses that should be declared unfit for habitation.

During the past year 30 new houses have been erected, 18 houses and 12 bungalows. Full details are set forth below as to inspections, notices served, etc. Building is proceeding rapidly in Wootton Bassett.

Housing Acts, 1909—1923.

1. *Number of new Houses erected during the Year 1925.*

(a) Total	30
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts, 1919 or 1923	
(i) By the Local Authority	—
(ii) By other bodies or persons, with subsidy	22
By private enterprise, without subsidy	8

2. *Unfit Dwelling Houses.*

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	71
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	5
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation (closed by owner)	3
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	39

3. *Remedy of Defects without service of formal Notice.*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	36
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4. *Action under Statutory Powers.*

A. Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919—

(i) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	5
(ii) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit—	
(a) By Owners	2
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	—
(iii) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	—

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(i) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	29
(ii) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied—	
(a) By Owners	29
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	—

C. Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909

(i) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	—
(ii) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	—
(iii) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	—
(iv) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	—
(v) Number of dwelling-houses demolished	—

I have the honour to remain, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

John L. Watson

Medical Officer of Health.